

OUR SCATTERED MEMBERS

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We as a body of believers in California, have a good many scattered members, but it is hard to determine how many.

The question is (or shall be) how can we reach them with the preached word?

The first thing that I notice is finance. We are short of money. The reason of this is the church is very poor in purse, and I fear the cause is, we do not seek first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, as directed by our Saviour.

We are short of preachers. Why? The same reason. What can we do under the circumstances as we have but one active minister, and the Mission Board wants to use him whenever he is not engaged at his pastoral work?

What can be done?

One thing I believe, we are not perfectly organized. Of course we have our Secretary, Treasurer, Deacons, Elders and Chairman; but is this enough?

We need a man of God appointed to look after our scattered ones, for they are sheep having no shepherd. Let the one appointed ascertain how many there are in one place; and if so be that there are enough to organize a church with secretary, treasurer, deacons and chairman. Let him organize, and leave them under the care of some elder; and if there are not enough to organize a church, invite them to attend the conference and camp meetings. Also to attend preaching wherever it is possible for them to do so, and prevail on them to read the church paper, the EVANGELIST. Let him be prepared with sample copies of the paper to give to every member he thus finds not reading it. I believe the church should be aroused to a more systematic work. I think there should be a separate fund for the business under consideration. I believe also that this ordained person should have some restitution for his labor but not in full of his time. Let him give at least one-tenth of the time to the work of the Lord. We know not what good a visit to one away from church privileges might do. And also the hand shaking that always makes one feel that you are a brother indeed.

Now brethren, let us to the work in earnest, and do all we can in our power by the help of God and the Holy Spirit that always guides us into all truth. Hear what the apostle says to the Corinthian brethren, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come." I know some of us will say that we are doing all we can; we have to keep our minister's salary paid or the church will go down, and our mission work or it will stop, but think you brother that

God's arm is short or that he will withhold any good thing from those who love him. Remember one of old has said, "I have never seen the righteous forsaken nor their seed begging bread."

Brother there is a battle to be fought along this line if we would succeed, for see, our captains are too few in number to rally the troops. What is the cause of this shortage of the officers? The first reason, want of money. The scripture says, "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? and which of you intending to build a tower sitteth not down first and counteth the cost? Let us ascertain as nearly as possible what would be the cost of looking after our scattered members, and make one hard struggle to rout the enemy of selfishness, and hang high the banner of King Immanuel and let it wave over our glorious church of which we are so proud. God's storehouse is full and plenty to spare; he also is rich in houses and lands and he will not withhold his blessing from us if we love him. Love is the fulfilling of the law. For God so loved us that he gave his only begotten Son to save the world.

Brethren, the subject before us is a wonderful one, and the means for the present needs are of great importance. Hear what a modern writer says: "I am convinced that the hard times, the financial crisis, the panics that every now and then cripple the business interests of the country, are directly tracable to the unfaithfulness of Christian stewards." We will not attempt to ascertain to what extent this is true. But one thing is true, there is a necessary connection between the temporal property of God's children and their obedience to Divine principles in the use of property. Hear what an old prophet says: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than meet, but it tendeth to poverty." (And this is sure poverty.) Israel withheld her tenth from God, and a curse fell upon the whole nation. The devourers destroyed the crops, and the vine cast its fruits before the time in the field, and again, they sowed much and brought in little, they earned wages and put them in a bag with holes. The Jews seemed to have lost for a time their thrift and gain. Why all this saith the Lord of hosts, because of my house that is waste, and ye run every man to his own house. And let me my brother ask the same question, why all this, every man is caring for his own house; and leaving the house of God unfinished, why not gather together the material in our reach, and build on that sure foundation Jesus Christ the chief corner stone, why not go into the mountains and in the valleys and in the hedges, and gather the lost and scattered material together, and labor with them until they

are fit material to place in the building. We need more consecrated sisters and brothers in this grand work of building. If we had three men like that grand general that took the moon light ride thro Jerusalem to view the ruins and to lay plans for its rebuilding, we would soon rally the troops in this beautiful valley, and build for God a grand house where his name might be hallowed and glorified.

Where is the man among us that is wholly sanctified unto the Master's use. Let the people praise thee oh God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God even our own God shall bless us.

DUTY

Read by Miss Deffa Hedrick at Christian Endeavor, Sunday evening, Apr. 3, '98. Maple Grove church, Ind.

Duty rounds out the whole of life from our entrance into it until our exit from it. There is the duty to superiors, to inferiors, to equals, to God and to man. Wherever there is power to use or direct, there is a duty devolving upon us. Duty is a thing that is due and must be paid by every man who avoids present discredit, and eventually moral insolvency. It is an obligation, a debt, which can only be discharged by voluntary effort and resolute action in the affairs of life. The abiding sense of duty is the very crown of character. It is the upholding law of man in his highest attitudes. Without it the individual totters and falls before the first puff of adversity or temptation; whereas, inspired by it, the weakest become strong and full of courage.

"Duty" says Mrs. Jameson, "is the cement which binds the whole moral edifice together, without which, all power, goodness, intellect, truth, happiness, love itself, can have no permanence but all the fabric of existence crumbles away from under us, and leaves us at last sitting in the midst of a ruin, astonished at our own desolation." Take man from the lowest depths of poverty, or from the downy beds of wealth, and you will find that to act well his part, he must recognize, and live up to the rule of duty. As the ship is safely guided across the ocean by the helm, so on the ocean of existence duty is the helm, without which life is lost. It is the lesson of history, no less than the experience of the present age, that an attention to duty in all its details is the only sure road to real greatness whether individual or national.

Duty is based upon a sense of justice—justice inspired by love—which is the most perfect form of goodness. Duty is not a sentiment, but a principle pervading the life, and it exhibits itself in conduct and action. Duty is above all consequences and often at a crises of difficulty, commands us to throw them over-